

**Dordéan, do Chroí  
A Hummingbird, your Heart**

**Doireann Ní Ghríofa**

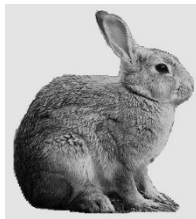


**Smithereens Press**



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Dordéan, do Chroí | A Hummingbird, your  
Heart

# Dordéan, do Chroí

Stánaimid isteach sa bhosca plaisteach,  
áit a gcodlaíonn tú i nead achrannach  
de shreangacha snaidhmthe.

Cosnaíonn cliabhán cuarach na gcnámh  
an dordéan bídeach atá ar foluain ionat,  
a shúile séadghlasa ar crith faoi do chraiceann.

Cuireann a sciatháin gaoth faoi do chuisle  
agus coinníonn macallaí na meaisíní  
ag feadaíl thall is anall, mar a thiteann  
an solas ón lá go mall. Taobh amuigh,  
bagraíonn crainn loma a ngéaga,  
ag sméideadh saoirse chugat.

An bhfanfaidh do dordéan linn, a leanbh bán,  
nó an éireoidh sé i dtreo saoirse na scamall-lán?

# A Hummingbird, your Heart

We peer into a plastic box,  
where you sleep in a tangled nest of wires.  
A curved cage of bone shelters  
the hummingbird heart that hovers within,  
his jade green eyes darting under your skin.  
All though the darkening day, wings flicker  
a pulse that keeps the huddled machines alive,  
echoing whistles back and forth  
in a chirping bird-tongue that only nurses understand.  
Outside, winter trees hold bare branches high,  
beckoning to the fragile bird that holds you with us.  
Will your hummingbird – so vivid, so slight –  
seek the freedom of skies, and take flight?

# Fáinleoga

Bhain na bioráin binneas ceoil ón gciúnas.  
Thuirling greameanna ar nós fáinleog  
i scuaine ar shreang  
ag fáinne an lae, ag faire  
ar shnáth cniotála á sníomh  
ina ghúinín gleoite  
de chrócbhuí chrithre  
gan laige, gan lúb ar lár,  
déanta di siúd  
a d'imigh  
i gcaoch na súl.

Sínte spréite i m'aonar  
i bhfuacht an ospidéil  
cuimlím míne, gile an ghúna olla  
le fuacht mo leicinn  
scaoilim leis an tsnaidhm  
ligim le

lúb  
ar  
lúb

Snáithe silte -  
fáinleoga dóchais  
ag titim as radharc  
le luí na gréine.

Líonann mo léan  
an ceirtlín olla  
i mo lámh:  
lúbtha,  
liath,  
lán.

# Swallows

The knitting needles drew a melody from silence  
as stitches followed one another  
like swallows landing on a wire,  
watching a small dress of softest yellow wool  
grow like a sunrise  
waiting for she who waited within.  
She, who came  
and left  
all too soon.

Stretched and stitched,  
I lie empty, raw, alone  
in the cold corridor of the hospital,  
the grey knot of my mind  
unravelling.  
I hold the woollen dress to my cheek,  
then unravel the stitches

one  
by  
one

swallows of hope  
disappearing at sunset  
to some unfathomable,  
faraway land.

My grief grows like wound wool.  
Dull.  
Full.

# Corda

Gorm, do shúile

Gorm, do bheola

Gorm, do mhéara

Gorm, do bharraicíní

Gorm

Gorm

Gorm.

Ghearr an dochtúir an corda imleacáin.

Ar oscailt mo shúl dom

bhí tú imithe, do chorp caite sa chré

i bpoll dorcha éigin.

Athcheangail an corda,

cúlaigh aníos chugam.

Le lámh i ndiaidh láimhe

tarraingím siar chugam tú

isteach ionam arís.

Diaidh ar ndiaidh –

matán le matán,

cnámh le cnámh,

fuil le fuil –

athshúim thú.

Ceanglaím an corda

timpeall ar mo chroí –

nasc nach scaoilfear choíche.

Dofheicthe. Doroinnte.

# Cord

Blue, your eyes  
Blue, your lips  
Blue, your fingers  
Blue, your toes  
Blue  
Blue  
Blue.

The doctor cut the umbilical cord.  
When I opened my eyes, you were gone,  
your body thrown into some dark hollow.

Connect the cord,  
come back to me.

With handfuls and armfuls of cord,  
I draw you back  
and reabsorb you  
limb by limb –  
muscle into muscle  
bone into bone  
blood into blood.

I wrap that cord tightly,  
knot it around my heart –  
a bond that will never be broken.  
Invisible. Indivisible.

# Sólás

I gceo gealaí meán oíche  
le ceol caillte, filleann sí ó chríocha ciana.

Aithním do bhall broinne,  
a cheolaire cíbe.  
Is fada liom go bhfillfidh tú arís chugam.

*Creideadh tráth gur fhill anam na marbhghinte mar cheolaire cíbe,  
chun suaimhneas a thabhairt dá máithreacha lena gceol.*



# Solace

Under midnight's moonlit mist,  
she returns from distant lands.

I recognise your birthmark,  
small warbler.  
I long for you to return to me.

*In Irish folklore, sedge warblers heard singing at midnight were said to be voices of stillborn infants who had returned to soothe their mothers.*

# Corr Éisc

Tá mo chorp cleitithe agam  
le síoda-liath na cumha  
is anois, seasaim i sruth an tsaoil  
cos-caol, ceann-maol  
le m'aghaidh in airde  
go deoranta.  
I lár-luas na h-abhann,  
sleamhnaíonn suaimhneas  
na ciúnas chugam.

# Heron

I feathered myself in silver silks,  
the shining plumage of loneliness.  
I stand still in shallow streams –  
slender-legged, sleek-headed.  
Here, I hold my head high,  
aloft, aloof.  
In the rushing gush  
of the river, a quiet calm  
swims toward me.

# Sreang Sínte

Poncaíonn cuailí bealach an bhóthair  
crainn mharbha, nocta agus sáite ar ais sa chré.  
Síneann sreanga eatarthu, léaslínte úra  
os ár gcionn. Amhail fréamhacha,  
tá a nglór plúchta, ainneoin gaoth gharbh  
ag tarraingt téada na cláirsí ciúnaithe.  
Le luí na gréine, bailíonn druideanna ann  
ag caint is ag cásamh a ngéaga goidte  
nach n-iompróidh nead ná ualach  
na beatha nua riamh arís.

# Telephone Wire

Poles punctuate the road –  
dead trees, stripped bare  
and pushed back into the soil,  
they grip taut lines, new horizons  
that hover over our heads.

They stand – mute as roots –  
as wind plucks the wires  
of this lonely lyre.

At sunset, starlings gather here  
and chatter condolences  
to these trees, whose lost limbs  
will hold nests of new life  
never again.

# Línte do Frida Kahlo

*"She lived dying"* – Andrés Henestrosa, 1925

Idir bás agus beatha  
luíonn Frida ina leaba,  
malaí mealltacha mar éin allta  
a scaipeann sciatháin scáthacha  
sa spéir thar a súile.

# Lines for Frida Kahlo

*"She lived dying"* – Andrés Henestrosa, 1925

Between life and death,  
Frida lies in her sickbed,  
her brows are wild birds  
spreading shadowed wings  
in the sky above her eye.

# Crann

Idir dall is dorch, lasann loinnir na gréine  
mo ghúna órga.

Teanntaíonn teannóga coirt mo choirp.

Sa smearsholas, suíonn smólaigh  
ina neadacha – síolta mo smaointe.

Éiríonn is eitlíonn siad uaim, mo chuid smaointe  
scaoilte, scaipthe sna scamail.

Maisím mé féin le réalta reatha  
idir ghéaga garbha. Sáim mo chuid fréamhacha  
i gcré na hoíche, súim súilíní drúchta.

Sínim i dtreo an dorchadais:  
mo ghrá geal, a phóg fhuar  
ina síoda i ngach pholl folaithe.



# Tree

At sunset, see my gown  
of bark burn golden,  
tightened by tendrils of ivy.  
Hear birds nestle in my nests,  
their flight, my thoughts made motion.  
I sink my toes into soft night soil,  
sip dew drops, and  
adorn myself with shooting stars  
that glister in tangled twigs.  
I stretch toward the dark,  
my lost lover –  
his cold embrace  
creeps into every crevice.

# Macalla Mara

Maidin dhorcha Samhna  
i dtigh mo sheanmháthar  
chrom creatlacha crainn chugainn,  
ag bualadh fuinneoige, ag bagairt orainn  
le géaga garbha.  
Shuigh mé cois tine,  
fillte i mbaclainn m'athar,  
móin ar dearg-lonrú taobh thiar  
de ghrainc ghruama an ghráta, ag éisteacht  
le ise is eisean ag sníomh snáthaid shíoraí  
scannail is streachailt, náirí nua naimhde  
agus sceideal na sochraide.  
D'fholaigh mé m'aghaidh,  
mo leiceann á chuimilt agam lena chliabhrrach  
go dtí nár chuala mé tada ach mo Dhada,  
a chuisle cothrom, seasta, buan  
amhail fuaim folaithe faoi amhrán na mbroigheall –  
tuile agus trá tonnta ag bualadh in agahaidh aille,  
macalla ag canadh i bpluais mhara.

# An Echo of Ocean

A dark November morning  
in my grandmother's house,  
where skeletons of trees creaked overhead,  
threatening us with sharp twigs.  
I sat folded within my father's arms  
by the range, where turf glowed red  
behind the black-toothed grimace of the grate  
as she and he discussed the endless strands  
of scuffles, scandals, schedules of funerals.  
I nestled further into my nook,  
pressed my cheek to his chest  
until all I heard was the steady,  
sturdy thump of my father's heart,  
the ebb and flow of ceaseless tide,  
and below the call of cormorants,  
a distant echo crashing through cliff caves.

# Faobhar an Fhómhair

Lá Lúnasa ag faobhar an Fhómhair  
tá préacháin ag rince trí fhoraois gaoithe.  
Lúbann abhainn idir na crainn,  
áit a ndreapann seanathair síos lena gharmhac  
chun clocha a chaitheamh san uisce.  
Preabann púróga agus sleamhnaíonn trí  
chraiceann na habhann, ag tumadh go tóin.  
Casann siad i gciorcail chomhlárnacha,  
a chuasanna ag cnagadh ar a chéile.  
Lastuas, tá fáibhile ag faire ar an gcruth.  
De dhearmad, ligeann sí lena greim  
ar dhornán duilleoga – glasa, órga –  
is scaoiltear iad le sruth.

# Cusp of Autumn

On an afternoon on the cusp of autumn,  
crows dance in a forest of wind.  
Here, a river tumbles between the trees  
where grandfather and grandson clamber  
down crumbling banks and stand together,  
skimming stones. Their pebbles slice through the skin  
of the stream and disappear into unseen depths,  
as concentric circles roll on the current.  
Above, a beech watching their rings forgets herself  
and drops a handful of leaves – golden, green –  
sending them scattering into the stream.

# Póigín Gréine

Scaipeann bricíní gréine  
ar dhroichead do shróine  
amhail ballóga ar chraiceann breac  
a shnámhann trí scátha dorchá is solas ómra  
ar a shlí suas srutha,  
dall ar shúile an iolair.

# Freckle

Freckles sweep  
over the bridge of your nose  
like speckles on the skin of a trout  
that swims through shallow shadows  
dappled with amber  
on its path upstream,  
blind to the eye of an eagle.

# Scáil an Seáil

*I ndiaidh taispeántas ealaíne de chuid Brian Lalor*

Clapsholas.

Éiríonn sí as scáileanna liath, le cúlú  
ó ghrágaíl agus glagarnach an mhargaidh dhearmadta.  
Trí bhruscar báite, siúlann sí na cnoic i dtreo a baile,  
a guth leath-phlúchta, seanbhean ina préachán piachánach  
clúdaithe le clóca dorchá, dúnta le dorn ag a scornach.  
Crochann braonta léar lonrach ar na díonta, áit a siúlann sí  
ag stamrógacht léi trí chúlsráideanna coincréiteacha.  
Lastuas, tá sreanga sínte, faobhar géar idir cathair  
is spéir. I measc lúbra na lánaí, tá na locháin beo,  
lasta le loinnir ómra gach lampa sráide.  
Ise an scáil folaithe ar chiumhais gach sméideadh súl.  
Seolann sí an oíche ar imeall a seáil,  
agus maireann macalla na staire i gcoiscéim a sáil.



# The Shawlie's Shadow

*After an art exhibition by Brian Lalor*

Dusk.

She looms out of shallow shadows,  
moves from cackle and call of past market stalls.

Unseen, she shuffles toward her hilltop home,  
her breath heavy, hoarse as a crow's croak,  
a black shawl clutched tightly at her throat.

She stumbles along backstreets of wet concrete  
where raindrops slump rooftops.

Overhead, wet wires hover between city and sky.

In this labyrinth of lanes, amber lamplight  
sets each puddle aflame, alive.

Palimpsest— she is the darkness  
that lurks on the brink of a blink,  
the past made manifest,

carrying nightfall on the frayed edge of her shawl  
and the echo of this city in each footfall.

# Na Cailleacha

*"Women who love to write poetry are the hagfish of the world. We eat everything. We eat the language. We eat experience. We eat other people's poems." – Ruth Stone*

Scoite, mímhúinte, iontaisí Deilfeacha  
deirfiúracha na natharacha ársa,  
caithimid saolta scartha óna chéile.  
Alpaimid coirp lofa, slogaimid nithe néalmhara  
bainimid ruainní siollaí as marbháin mheilte.  
I scáileanna mara, cuirimid aníos agus ithimid  
siollaí sciobtha, consain ghoidte.  
Ólaimid gealacha dubha.  
Luímid lán, líonta, dúileach sa duifean  
ag glacaireacht le guairneáin ghlae  
ag rannaireacht as ramallae.

# Hagfish

*"Women who love to write poetry are the hagfish of the world. We eat everything. We eat the language. We eat experience. We eat other people's poems." – Ruth Stone*

Aloof and uncivil, living fossils,  
ancient snake sisters of the Delphic Sybil,  
we spend lifetimes apart.  
We devour rotting remains,  
we scavenge on the strange,  
stripping morsels of consonants  
from crumbling corpses.  
In ocean shadows,  
we exhume and consume  
stolen syllables.  
We gulp black moons.  
See us lie, gloating in the gloom,  
spinning rhymes from swirls of slime.

# Mamó

D'iompair tú m'ubhán ionat  
mo bhriathar mar bhraon  
bídeach i do bhroinn.

Anois, seasaim ag do shochraid  
leanbh lae á luascadh agam  
súil liom ar an mbreith  
is súil liom ar an mbás  
sruth fola ag sileadh asam –  
caoineadh corcairdhearg.

# Grandmother

You carried the egg that made me  
in your womb, the whisper of a word  
that became my world.

Now I stand at your funeral,  
newborn nestled into my neck,  
one eye on life, the other on death  
as blood trickles down my thighs –  
a crimson cry.







A meditation on the relationship between creativity, parenthood, the female body, and the natural world, *Dordán, do Chroí | A Hummingbird, your Heart* is Doireann Ní Ghríofa's first dual-language publication. It offers moments of intense pain and longing condensed into a chapbook of poems each 'so vivid, so slight'.

Doireann Ní Ghríofa's poems have appeared in literary journals in Ireland and internationally. The Arts Council has twice awarded her bursaries in literature. Her Irish language collections *Résheoid* and *Dúlasair* are both published by Coiscéim. Earlier this year, she was nominated for a Pushcart Prize (USA) and her pamphlet of poems in English *Ouroboros* was longlisted for The Venture Award (UK). [www.doireannnighrioifa.com](http://www.doireannnighrioifa.com)



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